

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND  
(ADOPTED 1/10/05)**

**PRESENTATION & WORKSESSION  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**Monday, November 29, 2004**

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

Mayor Porter  
Councilmember Austin-Lane  
Councilmember Barry  
Councilmember Elrich  
Councilmember Seamens  
Councilmember Williams

**OFFICIALS ABSENT:**

Councilmember Mizeur

**ALSO PRESENT:**

City Manager Matthews  
City Clerk / Treasurer Waters  
Police Chief Creamer  
HCD Director Daines  
Community and Government Liaison Ludlow  
Deputy City Manager Hobbs  
Landlord Tenant Manager Walker  
Assistant City Attorney Perlman  
Assistant City Attorney Sigman  
Recreation Director Haiduven  
Public Works Director Lott

The City Council convened at 7:32 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Seamens commented on the COG coalition proposed to address the Takoma Branch tributary of Sligo Creek. A grant application is being submitted by COG. There is a December 10 deadline. Ms. Porter agreed to put a resolution on the agenda for December 6.

Ms. Austin-Lane said she was approached by a resident about supporting Mark Cohen in his efforts to produce "Takoma Coffee House." He is trying to get a matching grant. What is Council's sense about supporting his application for the grant. He is attempting to raise the \$5,000 for the match. Ms. Porter suggested that Council endorse his efforts. Mr. Seamens commented on the high quality of the show. He suggested encouraging the community to support the program through donations.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

## **PRESENTATION**

### **1. Update on Community Center Construction Project.**

Ms. Matthews reported on her research on debt service in other municipalities. Gaithersburg and Greenbelt did not issue debt in FY04. Hyattsville did issue some debt in FY05. She will provide a written report after other responses are received.

Ms. Matthews also responded to Mr. Seth Grimes' request for the minutes of the November 22 closed session. The City Attorney has advised that the minutes remain sealed. A number of the documents distributed at the meeting are now considered public and have been provided to Mr. Grimes, including the summary and final agreement with James F. Knott Construction.

## **WORKSESSION**

### **2. Adoption of Updated/Reformatted City Code.**

Assistant City Attorney Perlman explained the purpose for the recodification. It is a reorganization which will allow timely supplements to be produced. The new codification will repeals certain outdated sections; other sections will need more substantive review by Council in the future. The code includes all ordinances adopted through July 26, 2004. More recent material will be added by supplement to the code.

Council asked a number of questions and discussed the changes proposed to the code. Ms. Perlman was asked to prepare an errata sheet to include with the adopting ordinance. There was Council consensus to proceed with first reading on December 6.

### **3. Amendments to Chapter 6. Housing to Address Electrical Service for Air Conditioning in Rental Housing.**

Staff members Sara Daines and Linda Walker, and Assistant City Attorney Sigman were present for the discussion.

Council proceeded with substantial discussion of the amendments to Chapter 6 Housing, and agreed to move forward with revisions that address electrical service for air conditioning in rental housing. Landlords would be required to maintain air conditioning in rental units where it had previously been provided. The proposal would also require landlords to include in their leases language which would indicate whether air conditioning is provided, how it is provided, and the cost for the service.

After lengthy discussion, there was Council consensus to defer the issue of addressing whether to amend the Rent Stabilization Article to address the capital improvement petition process concerning air conditioning until discussion of rent stabilization in the new year. Staff was directed to provide more information concerning the issue of energy efficiency of central air

versus window units.

## **BREAK**

The Council recessed for a scheduled break at 8:36 and reconvened to continue the worksession at 8:53 p.m.

### **4. Financing for the Community Center Project. (Hobbs, Creamer, Daines, Haiduven, Lott)**

Deputy City Manager Hobbs, Police Chief Creamer, HCD Director Daines, Recreation Director Haiduven, and Public Works Director Lott were present for the discussion of options for reducing expenditures and increasing revenues to help finance the community center project. Ms. Porter noted this is one of several discussions to be held on these issues.

Increase in parking violation fines: After substantial discussion, there was Council consensus to proceed with the proposed revisions. Chief Creamer was directed to come back next week at first reading with the ordinance including a recommendation for addressing Mr. Seamens' desire to allow minor personal auto repairs on the street.

Increase in the rental housing license fee: After Council discussion and questions about the proposal, the City Manager agreed to come back next week with more information.

Application fee for capital improvement and hardship petitions: After discussion about the burden on landlords and the impact on tenants if this cost is passed through to them on their rents, Council deferred this decision until next week.

Increase in the tree removal permit fee: After discussion, a majority of the Council agreed to double the fee, from \$25 to \$50.

Residential permit parking fees: Council directed staff to keep the fee as it is currently, but to step up enforcement.

Fee for notary services: Currently the service is free for everyone. Ms. Matthews recommends charging a fee. She will come back with more information on fees charged in other jurisdictions.

Fee for fingerprinting services: The City Manager was directed to come back with more information.

Procurement Officer position: Council supported the City Manager's recommendation to combine the duties with another staff position.

Passport Agent position: Council generally supported eliminating the position, but deferred the decision. The City Manager was directed to come back with further information on the position

workload and the number of passports processed.

Reduction of hours for the Landlord Tenant Office: Staff was directed to come back with additional information about the impact of reducing the Landlord Tenant Specialist position to part time.

Decrease in funding for contractual grant writing assistance: Council will address this issue further next week.

Reduction of Library hours: Council decided to make no change to the Library hours.

Reduction in funding for new/replacement books in the Library: There was no Council consensus to make the reduction of \$5,000.

Reduction in the size and frequency of the City Newsletter: After a discussion, the majority of the Council was opposed to this suggestion. If either of the absent Councilmembers want to bring it up next week, the subject will be revisited.

Specialized litigation services related to the Washington Adventist Hospital expansion: The majority of Council agreed to maintain the litigation fund. Mr. Seamens disagreed.

Reallocation of “savings” related to employee health insurance: Council concurred with the recommendation to reallocate the savings to the community center.

Reduction of the City’s support of Day Laborer Site: After discussion, Council opposed making this reduction.

Reallocation of selected City Priorities funding: Council did not make a decision on this item. Ms. Matthews was directed to bring back more information next week.

Decrease in funding for employee training: Council opposed making this reduction.

Reduction in funding for operation of the community center and computer learning laboratory: Ms. Matthews noted that the savings will be realized because the community center will not be operational for the full 26 weeks budgeted in FY05. Council concurred with this.

Use balance of contingency accounts for community center: Council deferred this decision until January when there is a review of the “hold” items on the CIP.

There was a Council discussion where other potential cost savings ideas were mentioned or proposed:

- Police Department staffing
- Use of Montgomery County officers on a temporary basis (Chief Creamer commented at

- length on the demoralizing aspects of this proposal and other issues with staffing)
- Police dispatch operations
- Freezing a position in Public Works (Mr. Lott indicated that this was related to automation of trash collection. The savings would not be realized for three years.)
- Elimination of trash pickup after a holiday
- Frequency of yard waste pickup
- Tool Library (Friends of the Tool Library are to be scheduled for an update to Council)

The discussion will be continued next week.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Council adjourned for the evening at 11:03 p.m.